

Yarmouth Community Garden 2013 Annual Report

R.B. Photography



The Yarmouth Community Garden's mission is to create an organic garden that offers fresh vegetables and flowers for distribution to area residents and seniors in need, provides plots for renters, and contributes a garden experience that benefits all of Yarmouth through education, mentoring, and volunteer participation. We are one of the largest and most diverse Community Gardens in the State.

YCG continued to be one of the largest garden contributors to the Maine Harvest for Hunger program, distributing over 4000 pounds of fresh organic vegetables to over 200 local residents. Recipients included Meals on Wheels, Yarmouth Community Food Pantry, Bartlett Circle, and Yarmouth Falls Apartments, as well as several more homebound residents. The vegetables are grown in our Community Plot, which this year was coordinated by Alison Romano, and tended and distributed by many Yarmouth community volunteers. Over the past decade, we have distributed over **26,000 pounds** of fresh vegetables to neighbors in need.

In the spring we recognized longtime Steering Committee member Norm Steele with the establishment of the Golden Trowel Award, to be given to an outstanding contributor of knowledge, expertise and willing labor towards

the success of the garden. Of course, Norm was the first recipient. We were all deeply saddened at his passing in May.

YCG's plot renters had a successful season as well, with 70 renters growing their own vegetables and flowers in 140 10-foot by 10-foot rental plots. Thanks to a generous donation from Allagash Brewing, we started replacing the fencing around the rental plots with a more permanent fence, getting posts in the ground. It will be completed in the spring of 2014.

The Children's Garden continued to be a big draw in 2013. Thirty-five children participated in the Garden Explorers classes, learning the basics of organic gardening through games, experiments, art projects, stories and of course, working in the dirt. The many volunteers involved in all aspects of YCG helped make the garden and its programs a huge success.

We continued this year a wonderful partnership with a very generous Yarmouth gardener, who invited YCG to pick and distribute flowers from her gardens. All summer, several dedicated volunteers made cheerful bouquets each week and added them to Meals on Wheels trays delivered to homebound seniors. Many thanks to this extraordinary local Yarmouth resident and our wonderful YCG volunteers.

The season ended with our popular 12th Annual Harvest Dinner at the YHS cafeteria where YCG volunteers served over 400 diners, and the raffle and auction were hugely successful. Proceeds help to fund the start-up of the garden each year for the following spring.

As a non-profit, community-oriented organization, donations and volunteer contributions are essential to the existence, improvement, and continuation of YCG. YCG received many generous donations in the form of service, skills, materials, and money. These donations supported the success of many individual projects and contributed to the overall successful 2013 year. We appreciate these generous financial donors, sponsors to our Harvest Dinner and the many volunteers, without whom the garden would not be the success that it is.

YCG also greatly appreciates the continued support of the Town of Yarmouth. The town provides land at the Frank Knight Forest and extends administrative support through Yarmouth Community Services. This support is imperative to the YCG in existence and functioning.

A dedicated volunteer Steering Committee leads the YCG project with the assistance of three coordinators who oversee the Community Plot, the Rental Plot and Children's Garden programs.

The YCG Steering Committee continues to look for ways to offer improved facilities and programs to the community in the coming year, and looks forward to welcoming new participants as well as our returning plot renters and volunteers.

The 2013 Yarmouth Community Garden Steering Committee:
Joy Ahrens, chair, and members Wendy Barmore, Cathy Gavin, Don Hodgson, Charlie Horstmann, Jay Kendeigh, Serena Mercer, Ted Metzler, Louisa Severance, Amy Sinclair and Norm Steele (deceased).

2013 Community Plot Coordinator: Alison Romano
2013 Rental Plot Coordinator: Marjorie Stone
2013 Children's Garden Coordinator: Christine Slader

The YCG website is www.yarmouthcommunitygarden.org.